City of La Porte Comprehensive Plan Update Steering Committee

Minutes of September 29, 1998

Members Present: Roy Baldwin, Peter Griffiths, Barbara Jenks, Martha Love,

Pat Muston, Chester Pool, Imogene Pulleine, Steve Valerius,

Gary Wigginton, Betty Waters, John Paul Zemanek

Members Absent: David Brady, Deotis Gay, Brian Moore, John Tomerlin

City Staff Present: Robert T. Herrera, John Joerns, Jeff Litchfield, Louis Rigby,

Joe Sease, Doug Kneupper, Steve Gillett, Stephen Barr,

Carol Buttler, Martha Gillett, Dana Ybarra, Peggy Lee

Note: Mayor Malone was unable to attend the meeting due to medical reasons.

John Joerns introduced Bret Keast and Ann Bagley, with the firm of Wilbur Smith Associates.

All staff members and steering committee members present introduced themselves.

1. Report from City Planners, Wilbur Smith Associates, regarding Comprehensive Plan Update process and the role and responsibilities of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

Bret Keast, Director of Planning for Wilbur Smith Associates (WSA), gave a brief overview of the process that will be followed during the update of the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Keast noted there would be a public forum on October 27, 1998, at the Sylvan Beach Pavilion between the hours of 6:00 pm and 8:45 pm. During the meeting, small groups will be formed and will begin identifying issues. Decisions will only be made on issues once there is a concensus of the group. If there are issues that can't be agreed upon, the group will move on to other things and those issues that remain unresolved will be addressed at the level of the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council.

Mr. Keast encouraged everyone to contact as many people as possible about the meeting on the 27th. A large turn out of citizens is important.

Mr. Keast reviewed sections of the project notebook that was previously distributed. Fourteen tasks will be undertaken as part of the process of updating the Plan.

Robert T. Herrera, City Manager, commented on the importance of the task that has been given to the steering committee and congratulated the members on their appointment.

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The Committee identified the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the City. They are as follows:

STRENGTHS

- 1. Galveston Bay
- 2. Neighborhoods
- 3. Park systems
- 4. Industry friendly
- 5. Police and Fire Protection/EMS
- 6. Small town atmosphere
- 7. Location (near Houston)
- 8. Greenery
- 9. Heritage
- 10. Energetic citizens
- 11. Low crime rate
- 12. Housing costs
- 13. Municipal facilities
- 14. Schools
- 15. Friendly people
- 16. Diversity
- 17. Strong business involvement and support

- 18. City administration
- 19. Good highways, deep water port (Barbour's Cut), rail yard, airport, Fred Hartman Bridge
- 20. Effective control
- 21. Responsiveness to community expectations
- 22. High average income
- 23. High education attainments
- 24. Young families
- 25. Move toward tourism; N.A.S.A., San Jacinto
- 26. Three higher education institutions
- 27. Employment opportunities
- 28. Plans implemented; goals
- 29. Fourth largest city in Harris County

WEAKNESSES

- 1. Size of library
- 2. Retail loss; lack of support
- 3. Restaurants
- 4. School reputation
- 5. No public transportation
- 6. No central place for social services
- 7. Total requirements for development; development guide
- 8. Industrial reputation
- 9. Lack of public relations
- 10. Lack of executive housing
- 11. Resistance to change
- 12. West end population not directed toward La Porte
- 13. Lack of entry identification
- 14. Visual appeal
- 15. Lack of family oriented recreation and activities (movie theatre)
- 16. Drainage (reputation for flooding)
- 17. Reputation of hurricanes

- 18. Negative media emphasis
- 19. Older areas appearance; established neighborhood
- 20. Lack of partnership with County
- 21. Traffic congestion (train @ Fairmont Parkway)
- 22. Absentee landowners (particularly along bay)
- 23. Lack of redevelopment between bay and older areas.
- 24. Low voter turn out
- 25. Community fragmentation
- 26. High land prices
- 27. Impacts of Bayport terminal (communication with port, lights, noise, view, traffic, lack of citizen concern, erosion)
- 28. Airport utilization; loss of FBO
- 29. Failure to enforce existing ordinances

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2. Election of a Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

Imogene Pulleine nominated Steve Valerius for Chairman. Peter Griffiths seconded the nomination. Mr. Valerius accepted the nomination and was named Chairman by acclamation.

Chester Pool nominated Betty Waters for Vice-Chairman. Martha Love seconded the nomination. Mrs. Waters accepted the nomination and was named Vice-Chairman by acclamation.

An oral vote was also taken with all members voting in the affirmative.

Future steering committee meetings were scheduled for November 5th & November 12th at 7:00 pm in the City Hall Council Chambers.

3. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Peggy Lee
Secretary
Comprehensive Plan Update Steering Committee

Approved on this 5th day of November, 1998.

Betty Waters Vice-Chairperson Comprehensive Plan Update Steering Committee